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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004222

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SUBJECT: PRT KIRKUK: POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN KIRKUK

Classified By: PRT Leader Howard Keegan for reasons 1.4(b) and 1.4(d).

SUMMARY. (C) Kirkuk is experiencing major population shifts due to a convergence of factors: its general population growth, an influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the departure of Arab wafidin (those whom Saddam imported to balance the Kurdish population), and the arrival of Kurds whom Saddam displaced. The registered population has grown from roughly three-quarters of a million prior to 2003 to well over a million today, in addition to 30-40,000 IDPs who have sought refuge in the province. The numbers of Arabs who have left Kirkuk and Kurds who have arrived are difficult to measure, but the GoI,s High Commission for Article 140 has made reasonable progress accepting applications and disbursing compensation from both departing Arabs and inbound Kurds. End summary.

#### Population Growing Rapidly

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¶2. (C) According to the provincial Director-General (DG) for the Public Distribution System (PDS), the GoI,s food ration program, there are 1,149,129 individuals registered to receive rations in Kirkuk Province; the comparable 2003 figure was 636,945. The Provincial Director of the ID card office reports that 1,353,700 individuals are registered to reside in Kirkuk Province, but he did not have comparable 2003 data. Whatever the reason for the discrepancy between the two offices, figures, it is clear that the province,s population has increased dramatically from the 1997 census, figure of 778,000.

#### IDPs Arriving From South

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¶3. (U) Kirkuk Province has an IDP population of approximately 6,000 families, according to the Provincial Displacement and Migration DG. Assuming six individuals per family, this is approximately 36,000 individuals. (NOTE: In this context, an IDP is someone not originally from Kirkuk who has arrived since 2003. It does not include returnees who were originally displaced from Kirkuk under the former regime.) Most are Arabs who fled deteriorating security situations in Baghdad, Diyala, Salah ad Din, and Anbar Provinces for Kirkuk,s relative security. According to the local office of Kurdish Human Rights Watch (KHRW), a local UNHCR partner monitoring this IDP population, the majority of these individuals have no interest in remaining permanently in Kirkuk until the province,s future status (with its possible implications for Kirkuk,s Arab community) under Article 140 is known.

¶4. (U) The province,s 6,000 IDP families do not figure in the population number in paragraph 2 because a provincial policy in effect since 2003 does not permit an individual

born outside Kirkuk Province to register his or her residency here. (Spouses and children of those born in the province, however, may register.) This prevents them from obtaining an ID card, a normal prerequisite to obtaining the food ration card required to draw PDS rations. The Ministry of Trade (which controls the PDS) issued a policy in 2006, however, which states that these IDPs may use their home-province food ration cards to obtain rations from Kirkuk,s PDS. According to the Refugee Director and NGOs, anywhere from 60-250 IDP families have taken advantage of this policy.

#### Article 140 Resettlement Compensation

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¶5. (U) Under the approved resolutions of the GoI,s High Committee for Article 140, &wafadin8 (&newcomer8) Arabs, usually Shia, who came to Kirkuk Province under the previous regime,s &Arabization8 program may apply for compensation if they agree to return to their provinces of origin. According to some PRT sources, many wafadin who came to Kirkuk under the former regime,s Arabization program have already returned to their original provinces, including many of those applying for resettlement compensation. The local office of the High Committee, which administers the program, began receiving and processing resettlement compensation applications in May 2007. By early December, the High Committee,s local office had received applications from over 13,000 families; the representative of an Arab group organized to facilitate compensation applications expects applications from another 6,000 families.

¶6. (SBU) Following a variety of political and administrative delays, the High Committee approved the first tranche of applications in September. As of early December, the High

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Committee had approved payment checks for 2,700 applications (the checks may be cashed at a designated bank in Kirkuk city), of which the High Committee,s Kirkuk office had distributed over 1,400. To prevent formation of crowds that might draw terrorist attacks, the local office aims to distribute about 100 checks per day, calling approved applicants individually to inform them of the approval and payment.

¶7. (U) Under the approved resolutions of the GoI,s High Committee for Article 140, those the former regime displaced from Kirkuk (mostly Kurds and, to a lesser extent, Turcomen) also may receive compensation if they return. Out of the 13,000 applications as of December 1, 2,600 had been submitted by Kurdish returnees and 10,500 by Arab wafadin. Kurdish representatives from the High Committee believe approximately 60,000 Kurdish families in total will apply for Article 140 compensation. However, because the High Committee prioritized processing wafadin applications, it has only recently begun processing returnee applications. According to several PRT sources, the vast majority of these applicants already have resettled in the province since 2003.

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